

Shurangama Mantra

VERSES AND COMMENTARY BY VENERABLE MASTER HUA

Translated by the Buddhist Text Translation Society

If you hold the Shurangama Mantra, it is magical language. Each phrase that you recite has its own special effect. But you don't have to think about this effect. Don't think, "Why is it that I have been reciting it for so long and haven't gotten any effect?" When you eat, you expect to appease your hunger for the time being; how can you expect to be full forever? When tomorrow comes, you still have to eat. And, holding the Shurangama Mantra is just this way. You hold it every day, every day, and then none of your efforts will be wasted.

Whoever recites and upholds the Shurangama Mantra has eighty-four thousand Vajra Treasury Bodhisattvas who are always guarding him on the left and right. That is true. However, when you recite this mantra, it's best that you don't false-think. If you keep on false thinking when you recite, the Vajra Treasury Bodhisattvas will think, "This person is really spineless--so dirty. I've been accompanying him, but I don't see much future in it. He's wasting my time." Then the Dharma Protecting good spirits will get angry. That's why you have to pay special attention to holding the precepts purely. The most important thing about holding the Shurangama Mantra is that you hold the precepts purely. If you don't hold the precepts, no matter what you cultivate, however you recite it, there will be no response. If you can hold the precepts, and in your mind there is no jealousy, no obstructiveness, no greed, no anger, and stupidity, then when you recite this mantra you'll have a great response and attain great benefit. I will tell you this, if you can hold and recite the Shurangama Mantra, there is more value in it than dealing in gold. Gold has gone up to eight hundred dollars per ounce at present, but if you can just recite the Shurangama Mantra once, that is equal to buying millions and millions of ounces of gold. Be aware of that. But then you should not hold the mantra out of greed. I've made the comparison of values, just so you'll know. You should realize, then, that if you hold it and don't get any response, it's because you aren't sincere enough.

I can't say that my way of lecturing the Shurangama Mantra is good. But I can say that nobody has ever lectured it in this way before. I composed a four-line verse for every line of the Great Compassion Mantra, which described the function and power of the given line of the mantra. Now, of course, in a four-line verse you can hardly explain all of the power in a given line of the mantra, because the wonderful meaning of the mantra is inexhaustible. Every single syllable and phrase of that mantra has boundless benefits. Obviously this is more than a four-line verse can contain. But, although one cannot talk about it completely, one can talk about it a bit. So one has to "Grab on to one, while the other ten thousand go by." The four-line verses are easy to remember, so if you can memorize them or remember what they're about, then you'll understand the meaning of each line of the mantra. From the simple, you can enter the profound. From a few, you

can enter into the many. From what's near, you can go to what's far. In this way, you can deeply enter the meaning of the mantra.

Actually, one cannot talk about a mantra or try to explain it. But we'll try to do it anyway. The purpose being, "to toss out a brick and get back a piece of jade." That's why I am lecturing the Shurangama Mantra. It shouldn't concern you whether these four lines are meaningful enough, or even totally accurate; just realize they come from my true heart. You can say they are my sweat and blood. I use my true mind to explain the Shurangama Mantra. And I hope after listening, you'll truly understand the meaning of this mantra even more deeply and more profoundly than I do. I hope the magnitude of your comprehension surpasses mine. That's why I say, I cast a brick and I hope to get jade back in return. I hope you discover your wisdom and illumine the Sutra Treasury, so that your wisdom becomes like the sea. People who study Buddhism should always aim for the best--always try to be better than you were. Always go forward and try to enter more deeply into levels of understanding. You shouldn't say, "I understand it, but I don't know how to cultivate it." It must actually be cultivated! If you do not cultivate, then no matter how much you know, it does not make sense at all. It is of no use. You must cultivate intensely. Put your feet firmly on the ground, and actually put the teaching into practice. Don't be so foolish as to steal the bell with your ears plugged up--cheating yourself and cheating others. In each of these four-line verses that I write, I completely exhaust my effort. I use my true mind to explain the Shurangama Mantra with the hope that all of you will understand even more than I do.

MANTRA: 25. SHE PWO NU

VERSE:

*THE COMFORT FROM OTHERS' TRANSFORMATIONS HAS
WONDERS WITHOUT END.
IN BLISS PROFUSE TO OVERFLOWING, ONE IS QUITE AT PEACE.
SERENE, WITH LITTLE GREED AND FREE OF ANY PASSION,
ONE AMASSES VIRTUE, PRACTICES GOODNESS, AND FURTHER
SETS UP MERIT.*

COMMENTARY:

SHE PWO NU refers to the Heaven of the Comfort from Others' Transformations, The gods in this heaven receive wonderful, supreme joy. *The Comfort from Others' Transformations has wonders without end.* / They do not have any sufferings, they enjoy only bliss. There is no end to this inconceivable state, because it's done by transformation--they use other people's spiritual penetrations and transformations to adorn their own heavenly merit.

In bliss profuse to overflowing, one is quite at peace. / The happiness is so abundant that it's like overflowing water. It just doesn't stop. You don't know what they are happy about. An atomic bomb would not disturb them. A hydrogen bomb would not alarm them. Even the laser--the "death light"--wouldn't get them, it's such a peaceful place. However, it's up in the heavens; it's not in the human realm.

Serene, with little greed and free of any passion. / Their minds are "plain"--literally, "bland," which means they don't have much false thinking. They are mild-mannered, clear, and lofty, which means they know contentment and have very few desires. They don't get up- set by anything. Nothing is that important. They are devoid of greed. They are no longer greedy for wealth, form, fame, food, or sleep. They have already cut off these five roots of the hells.

One amasses virtue, practices goodness, and further sets up merit. / They can amass virtue and cultivate the good, and then they can do meritorious deeds. Of course they make a lot of progress. However, when people get up to the heavens, they enjoy the bliss so much, that it is harder to cultivate. In the Sutras, it says that if you have wealth, it's hard for you to study the Way. With so much bliss in this heaven, it's also hard to cultivate the Way. People only bring forth the resolve for Bodhi when they are afflicted, when they are suffering. It doesn't occur to them to cultivate when they are happy. They think everything is fine. "Why should I cultivate?" is their attitude.

to be continued

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*by Venerable Master Hua.
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Don't get angry at school or at home or at anything. If you learn to not get angry, then you will have good wisdom and when you grow up you will be able to help others. You should help others, don't want others to help you. You should want to help all living beings. So you should learn how to change and be compliant and good. Learning to benefit all people is the meaning of our school. Work very hard. Don't be afraid.

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